

A short note on the “Hidden Treasure” and the major lacuna in sourcing the earliest transmissions for this Ḥadīth Qudsī

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كنتُ كنزاً مخفياً فأحببتُ أن أُعرف فخلقتُ الخلقَ لكي أُعرف

I was a Hidden Treasure and I desired to be known. Therefore I created creation in order to be known!

There appears to be a serious lacuna in both the traditional and modern literature regarding the earliest source transmissions for this *ḥādīth qudsī* (extra-Quranic saying of God). In the second volume of his monumental study of Ḥallāj, Louis Massignon (d. 1962) offers a very brief sanad (chain of narration) in one of his notes regarding the saying which is quite vague and does not really say very much.¹ For his part, and from within the Sunnī corpus, the august and learned Badī‘uzzmān Furūzānfar (d. 1970) was unable to trace its earliest textual transmissions earlier than the Kubrāwī shaykh Najmuddīn Dayyāh al-Rāzī (؎) (d. 1256) and Ibn Taymīyyah (؎) (d. 1328) (!)² Yet Ibn ‘Arabī (؎) (d.1240) had already extensively cited it throughout his works and claims in his *Futūhāt al-Makkīyyah* (The Meccan Openings), II.399, I.28. I, to have verified its soundness via kashf (spiritual unveiling). The orthodox Sunnī narrators and traditionists unanimously consider this *ḥādīth qudsī* to be a forgery without any sound transmission.

An unpublished 2011 PhD dissertation at UC-Berkeley by Moeen Afnani,

¹ Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam: Volume 2, The Survival of al-Hallāj* (Trans.) Herbert Mason (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 294.

² *Aḥādīth va qışṣaṣ-i-mathnawī* (The Ḥadīth and Stories of the Masnavī), (ed.) Ḥusayn Dāwūdī (Tehran: Second Edition, Amir Kabir, 1381 solar/2002 CE), 120 (ḥādīth number 205).

entitled '*Unravelling the Mystery of the Hidden Treasure: The Origin and Development of a Ḥadīth Qudsī and its Application in Sufī Doctrine*,' purports to offer critical information on the genealogy of our item in its first chapter. But it does not tell us what we didn't already know. Be that as it may, this ḥādīth qudsī was in fact cited as early as during the 9th century CE by the Sufi Hakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. 869 CE),³ which surprisingly the thesis above does not mention, that places its earliest known textual existence (and recension) as being contemporaneous with the lifetimes of the last few Twelver Shi'ī Imāms (ع). Seeing that virtually no opinion was given regarding either its soundness or unsoundness by the earliest of the Imāmi Shi'ī intellectual figures until about the Timurid and Safavid periods, is it remotely possible that the origins of this pivotal ḥādīth qudsī in Islam may in fact be with Imāmi Shi'ī circles? One of the reasons why I ask is because of the form of the word 'love' employed in Arabic by this ḥādīth qudsī, i.e. ḥubb, which in itself is quite a key motif in the initiatic teachings of the Shi'ī Infallibles (ع).

³ See Bernd Radtke and John O'Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism: Two Works By Hakīm al-Tirmidhī* (Richmond Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996).